

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8055

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER 1974 MEMORANDUM OF ARCHBISHMP IAKOVOS
SURFACES AGAIN

REF: A. ATHENS 8136 (NOVEMBER 12, 1974)

B. STATE 249635 (NOVEMBER 13, 1974)

C. ATHENS 8147 (NOVEMBER 13, 1974)

D. ATHENS 8199 (NOVEMBER 14, 1974)

1. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE MEMORANDUM OF ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS, WHICH ALLEGEDLY RECORDED THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER ON OCTOBER 7, 1974, HAS ONCE AGAIN BECOME HEADLINE NEWS IN ATHENS. IN THE COURSE OF A HEATED EXCHANGE BETWEEN CU/NF LEADER MAVROS AND PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON OCTOBER 16 (ATHENS 8021), AFTER THE FORMER WAS NETTLED BY PAPANDREOU'S IMPLIED CRITICISM OF HIS HANDLING OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM DURING HIS TENURE AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY, MAVROS RAISED QUESTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH PAPANDREOU'S ALLEGATION TWO DAYS BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 1974 ELECTION THAT MAVROS AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD SIGNED A SECRET AGREEMENT ABOUT CYPRUS. THE SUBSEQUENT EXCHANGE BROUGHT OUT THAT THE
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MATTER HAD TO DO WITH THE IAKOVOS MEMORANDUM. (THE ISSUE WAS

THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC DISCUSSION IN ATHENS LAST NOVEMBER AS RESULT OF AN EVANS-NOVAK ARTICLE IN THE WASHINGTON POST - REFTELS.)

2. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THIS PARLIAMENTARY WRANGLING, IN AN EXCLUSIVE STORY ON OCTOBER 18, KATHIMERINI (INDEPENDENT, PRO-GOVERNMENT) PUBLISHED A REPORT FROM ITS "SPECIAL COLLABORATOR" IN WASHINGTON (UNNAMED) WHO SUGGESTED THAT THE IAKOVOS MEMO WAS ACTUALLY A FORGERY PREPARED BY THE AMERICAN "SECRET SERVICES". THE KATHIMERINI "COLLABORATOR" ADVANCED THE THEORY THAT THE INTENT OF THE FORGED MEMO WAS TO STRENGTHEN THE ELECTORAL CHANCES OF PASOK IN THE NOVEMBER 17 ELECTIONS SO THAT IT WOULD EMERGE AS THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY- THUS CAUSING CONCERN TO JUNTA REMNANTS IN THE ARMY OVER SUCH A "NATIONAL DANGER". ACCORDING TO THE THEORY THIS INCREASED CONCERN OF THE ARMY WOULD ACT AS A CONSTANT "THREAT" TO THE NEWLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT AND WOULD CONSTRAIN PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS FROM EXERCISING A FREE HAND IN HIS MANAGEMENT OF SUCH PROBLEMS AS CYPRUS, GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS, AND GREEK RELATIONS WITH NATO AND THE U.S. THE KATHIMERINI REPORT RECALLED THAT THE TEXT OF THE IAKOVOS MEMO HAD BEEN TELEXED TO PROMINENT GREEK-AMERICAN GEORGE VOURNAS (WHO WAS THEN IN ATHENS) ON NOVEMBER 14 AND VOURNAS IN TURN PASSED IT ON IMMEDIATELY TO PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU WHO THEN USED IT IN A CAMPAIGN SPEECH. THE MEMO HAD APPARENTLY BECOME AVAILABLE AFTER ELIAS DIMITRACOPOULOS HAD SUBMITTED IT TO THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE THE PREVIOUS WEEK.

3. IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST WEEKEND, BOTH MAVROS AND PAPANDREOU EXCHANGED FURTHER ACCUSATIONS AND CHARGES ABOUT THE MATTER, WITH MAVROS CATEGORICALLY DENYING THE TRUTH OF THE CONTENTS OF THE MEMORANDUM AND PAPANDREOU, IN EFFECT, INSISTING ON ITS GENUINENESS. AS A RESULT OF THE KATHIMERINI STORY AND THE CONTINUING MAVROS-PAPANDREOU EXCHANGES, THE MATTER HAS AGAIN BECOME A HOT STORY WHICH DOMINATED THE NEWS OVER THE WEEKEND AND IN TODAY'S AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS (THE ONLY ONES PUBLISHED ON MONDAYS). ACROPOLIS (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) RAN AN EXCLUSIVE FRONT PAGE STORY OCTOBER 18 WHOSE HEADLINE SUGGESTED THAT ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS HAS DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF ANY "MEMORANDUM" ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGES CONFIDENTIAL

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WRITING A REPORT ON HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER. KATHIMERINI ON OCTOBER 18 CARRIED A FRONT PAGE FOLLOW-UP TO ITS STORY OF THE PREVIOUS DAY IN WHICH IT STATES IN ITS HEADLINE "THE MATTER OF THE MEMORANDUM BECOMES COMPLICATED". IT ALSO PRINTED AN EDITORIAL THE SAME DAY HEADLINED "IS IT POSSIBLE?", WHICH SEEMS TO ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MEMORANDUM MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORGED BY "SECRET SERVICES".

4. AT THIS JUNCTURE, THE WHOLE MATTER HAS BECOME QUITE COMPLICATED, CONTRADICTORY AND CONFUSING. A FURTHER ELEMENT IN THE CONFUSION WAS ADDED BY A TO VIMA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) STORY OF OCTOBER 19 IN WHICH THE SOURCE OF THE ORIGINAL KATHIMERINI STORY - GEORGE VOURNAS - REPORTEDLY DENIED TO A TO VIMA CORRESPONDENT THAT HE HAS HAD ANY CONTACT RECENTLY WITH ANY "SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT" OR ANY OTHER REPORTED FROM KATHIMERINI. MEANWHILE, THE LEFTIST PRESS IS PUSHING THE LINE THAT THIS WHOLE MATTER RELATES TO ANOTHER U.S. "PLOT" TO UNDERMINE AND DIVIDE THE CENTER IN GREEK POLITICS AND ALSO TO DIVERT NATIONAL ATTENTION AWAY FROM CYPRUS.

5. SO FAR WE HAVE HAD NO QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS ON THIS MATTER. IF ASKED WE PLAN TO TAKE THE LINE THAT THE ATTRIBUTION TO THE U.S. OF ANY ROLE IN THIS COMPLICATED AND CONTRADICTORY AFFAIR IS COMPLETELY BASELESS.
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